



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen Minutes
Tuesday, August 18, 2020 –4:00 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

This meeting will be held via video conference, consistent with Gov. Baker's temporary modifications to Open Meeting Law due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Selectman Joanne Semanie
Absent: Selectman Ed Silva
Administrative Staff: Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary, Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant to the Boards
Other Attendees: Board of Health Chair Margaret Rice, Rowe Camp and Conference Center Director Benjamin Werner
Audience of Citizens: None

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M., a quorum of the board present via remote participation.

MOTION: Roll call vote to call to order:

Chair Sokol: **yes**

Silva: **absent**

Vice-Chair Semanie: **yes**

Background: This group of individuals (self-titled "Covid Group") has been meeting weekly for the past few months to listen to the state Covid-19 briefings and discuss ongoing matters in town related to the pandemic. As Board of Health Clerk Joanne Semanie was elected to the Board of Selectmen, there is now a quorum of the board present during these weekly meetings, and as such, must take place in open session.

Covid Discussion: The following points/topics were addressed during discussion:

Board of Health Chair Maggie Rice provided the following updates:

- There were 2 people who had traveled from states with high covid-19 rates who were in quarantine
- There were 3 cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Massachusetts
- Chair Rice noted that Park Commission inquired about opening up the fitness room and it would be discussed with the Board of Health on Wednesday, August, 19th. Chair Sokol said there was safety protocols that were established by the state and would send the specific guidance to the Board of Health.

- Chair Rice reported that the school voted to open Rowe Elementary School on August 25, 2020 and classes beginning with full in person learning on September 8, 2020. The Board of Health will discuss protocols on Wednesday, August 19th.
- There will be a 'drive-thru' Flu Clinic in Charlemont on Saturday, September 26, 2020 at the Charlemont Fairgrounds for Rowe citizens. The second one will take place in the former Heath School on Saturday, October 3, 2020. Both are scheduled for 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

MOTION: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Selectman Semanie.

MOTION: Roll call vote to call to order:

Chair Sokol: yes

Silva: absent

Vice-Chair Semanie: yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: *SEPTEMBER 3, 2020*

Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair



Selectman Joanne Semanie

Documents:

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Deduction Matter

Thanks to Joanne, it was uncovered that a handful of summer youth employees were not having proper deductions taken out of their paychecks. Even though they had all filled out their OBRA paperwork, they were never entered into the system by the previous treasurer at the start of the season. As such, they were not paying into Social Security or OBRA. Going back to January 1st, the summer youth should have paid a total of \$2,410.90 into their OBRA funds (based off of \$32,145.38 in earnings.)

Because of how the payrolls processed in Harpers, approximately \$870.98 was paid into social security for this time frame for these employees, which has been refunded to the town. However, this means that a further \$1,539.92 will still need to be paid out.

While I would have concerns about this if it were year-round adult employees, these are seasonal summer youth employees. There will be no further paychecks to try and recoup costs this calendar year, and it is not realistic to expect teenagers to be actively tracking their deductions for accuracy.

As failure to contribute to their OBRA accounts will result in a penalty on their 2020 tax filings, it may be better to just absorb the cost this one time. That would be my recommendation at this time, but it will ultimately be the Board's decision.

Though it's a bit of a "closing the barn door after the horses have left", all of these employees now have OBRA as a deduction on their payroll moving forward.

Paul McLatchy III